Dr. Shin-ichiro Yokoyama, President of Japan Society of Project Management  
Distinguished Guests, Friends, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen  

I am delighted to extend my warm greetings to you on this momentous occasion and congratulate the Organising Committee of ProMAC2010 International Conference for organising such an impressive event. I am sorry that due to urgent and unexpected commitments in Sydney I am not able to join you personally.  

All of my professional life, from the time I graduated in engineering some 42 years ago till now has been associated with project management in its broadest sense, that includes also what people refer to as program management, portfolio management and systems management. I have been a practitioner, a researcher, an educator and an advisor to major clients in Australia, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. I have also taught in North American universities.  

Not only have I observed the evolution of project management but also participated in its intellectual development and tried to learn and in parallel share my insights and perspectives as widely as possible globally. When I started my career it was a pretty small field and it was considered a part of operations research aka management science. It gradually developed into its own field and was promoted by bodies such as the Project Management Institute, Australian Institute of Project Management and the International Project Management Association, or IPMA and of course the Society of Project Management, Japan. I was one of the individual members of IPMA when it reconstituted in 1983 and my membership number was 007.  

Over the years project management has grown to be a large field of endeavour. Currently billions of dollars are spent annually in training of project managers worldwide but that has not translated into performance improvements. The focus has been on training and obtaining of certificates or qualifications rather than learning the art of management. Projects and programs have grown in complexity, due to myriad of drivers such as complex regulations, rising demands and community expectations, political and social trends, conflicts and so on. In such an environment of complexity and change it is essential that project managers should learn and practice the art of management and develop competence to apply knowledge judiciously. Normative learning is insufficient and may in fact be unhelpful in some cases.  

To deal with complexity, change, conflicts, risks and uncertainties and yet be able to craft a project or program that aligns well with the stakeholders’ needs and expectations requires development of insights and perspectives. The project manager needs to access a vast body of knowledge to address the issues faced with. They need to develop deep reflective learning capabilities that do not come with training in tools and techniques alone; these need to be nurtured. Project managers need to understand the whole complex system that the project/program is made of and how it can be guided to a successful conclusion. Of course tools and techniques can help if applied prudently.  

ProMAC2010 follows in the traditions of previous ProMAC conferences in that it brings academics and industry leaders together to share insights, learn from one another’s experience and develop keen friendships. The Society of Project Management, Japan has achieved so much in promoting the field of project management in such a short period of time. I have had the privilege of participating in 3 prior ProMAC conferences and co-organising ProMAC2006 Conference in Sydney. Each event has impressed me more in terms of the opportunities they provided for learning and intellectual enrichment. The next generation of project/program managers need to understand that projects/programs are complex phenomena changing dynamically with time. To positively influence such systems one needs to:
- Be a creative and lateral thinker
- Possess critical thinking/conceptualisation skills
- Be a strategist and integrator
- Be a reflective learner
- Possess ability to optimise/customise solutions across technical, organisational, financial, social and environmental angles
- Be proactive to tap opportunities and resolve uncertainties
- Be innovative and contribute to intellectual evolution of the field

The 21st Century project/program managers are thus different to the past generations. We all have to learn what the new brave world will ensue and develop the mindset and intellectual power to lead it.

I commend ProMAC2010 to you and wish you a successful and enriching experience. I hope that you and your partner would also enjoy the fine entertainment and social interactions of ProMAC2010. I look forward to the next opportunity to participate in this event. Thank you very much for your attention

I wish you all a successful conference

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